



The Recreation Report

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Recreation Department Plans 50th Anniversary Celebration in 2006

The Town of Hamburg Recreation Department has adopted the theme "50 Years of Family Fun" as it makes plans to celebrate the department's 50th anniversary this year.

On Jan. 24, Recreation Director Martin C. Denecke met with the Re-Creating History Committee, made up of the Hamburg town historian and a number of people who had knowledge of the origins of the recreation department. Their purpose: to verify the year in which the department began.

Following a review of documents and verbal histories from the participants, they confirmed that the department was established in 1956. Recreation was first listed as a department in January of 1956, according to Town Board minutes. Minutes from July 2, 1956 read as follows: "Councilman Werner moved, seconded by Councilman Lester, the approval of Robert Wilson, 45 Milford Street, as Director of Recreation for the Town of Hamburg; salary Eighty Dollars (\$80.00) per week plus mileage, to Sept. 1, 1956."

Mr. Wilson was subsequently rehired in September 1956 (at \$100 per month) and stayed on as the Town of Hamburg's part-time recreation director for the next 14 years.

From those humble beginnings sprang a department that now has top-shelf facilities and program offerings for its 55,000 residents and surrounding communities. "Much credit for the development of the department goes to Allan Greenfield, the first full-time professional director, who was hired in 1970, and his successor, Richard Tripp, who took over from 1988 until his retirement in 2002," noted Mr. Denecke.

The recreation department will celebrate its 50th anniversary, using the "50 Years of Family Fun" theme, in publications and special events throughout the year.

Questions or comments? Call the Recreation Department at (716) 646-5145.

Sno-Fest Is Slated Feb. 19-24

The 2006 Sno-Fest will be held at Hamburg Town Arena from Feb. 19-24, coordinating with the winter break for many local school districts. This year's Sno-Fest, like last year's program, will include a mascot hockey game, snow sculpture contest, and a hockey skills challenge.

Among the new events to the Sno-Fest lineup for 2006 is the Family Ice Olympics, in which families

will compete as teams both on and off the ice in such activities as ice skating and a sled relay race. "It promises to be a fun and family-oriented event," said Luke T. Sullivan, recreation coordinator and this year's Sno-Fest coordinator.

The Sno-Fest events are free to the public, with the exception of the public skate, which costs \$4.00 for children and \$5.00 for adults, or \$3.00 for children and \$4.00 for adults with an official Town of Hamburg Discount card. Ice skate rentals cost \$2.00 per pair.

See page 2 for the complete schedule of events.

Welcome to the Report!

The Town of Hamburg Recreation Department is pleased to present its inaugural newsletter, which will be published quarterly.

Its purpose is to inform town residents about recreation department events and facilities.

This first issue covers the year 2005 in review, along with highlights of special events and initiatives for the new year.



Mascots like these will be at this year's Sno-Fest.

Youngsters Enjoy Many Summer Programs in 2005



Nottingham Playground wrapped up its 2005 season with a barbecue.

During the summer of 2005, the Town of Hamburg Recreation Department offered many exciting programs for residents of the Town of Hamburg. Most notably, the Youth Basketball program increased in popularity compared to 2004, with an additional 10 teams, bringing the total to over 30 teams. Additionally, the program developed a partnership with the McKinley Parkway Pizza Hut, which provided the 360-plus participants with t-shirts.

Another program that was offered in the summer of 2005 was the Hook A Kid on Golf Program, which had a triumphant season. A team of eight players from the program traveled to Richmond, Virginia, to participate in the National Traditions of Golf Challenge Tournament.

"We're proud of our comprehensive youth golf instruction program," said Martin C. Denecke, Director of Recreation for the Town of Hamburg.

The recreation department also made improvements to its Day Camp program. In 2005, the program added several field trips and sports clinics to its list of activities. In addition to going to the Town of Hamburg beach every Friday, one of the new field trips that participants took was to a Buffalo Bisons baseball game. The program also offered activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and special events, such as the Buffalo Zoo's "Zoomobile." The "Zoomobile" event included a presentation to the Day Camp youths about the animals.

"The Day Camp Program allows working families to have a healthy place for their kids during the workday," said Mr. Denecke. "It's a fun place to be for boys and girls."

The Summer Playgrounds program, which had to cut back on the number of days and sites that were open due to budget constraints, still managed to have a fun-filled season.

"We are emphasizing the quality of each playground program over the quantity of playground programs," noted Mr. Denecke. "We want to ensure that the children participating in the program enjoy their time at the playground."

The summer baseball program also had an increase in participation, adding two more teams to its program.

New Partnership with BWI Inc.

For the summer of 2006, most of the 2005 programs will be offered again. Additionally, this spring the department will be launching a new eight-week program in partnership with BWI Inc., a company specializing in health and wellness services, called "Be Fit Teens." The program will be a beginner fitness program which will be offered at the Town of Hamburg Fitness Center. The program registration fee is \$85, but \$50 of that total should be covered by most major insurance providers upon completion of the program.

Hamburg Is All-Star Start Smart Site

The Town of Hamburg is one of only a handful of communities across the country to be recognized as an All-Star Start Smart site by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS).

The Start Smart Sports Development Program brings parents and children ages 3 and older together to work on pre-sports skills such as catching, throwing, kicking, and hitting in a fun, non-threatening environment. The Start Smart curriculum teaches parents how to best work with their children to develop motor skills that will give both parent and child a successful start in sports.

In addition to offering the Sports Development Program, the department offers the five sport-specific Start Smart Programs in football, baseball, basketball, soccer, and golf, making it eligible to receive the All-Star distinction.

2006 Sno-Fest Schedule

Sunday, Feb. 19

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.: Mascot Hockey Game
* Local Mascots vs. Hamburg Hawks Mini-Mites
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.: Public Skate

Monday, Feb. 20

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.: Snow Sculpture Contest
11:00 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.: Public Skate

Tuesday, Feb. 21

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.: Hockey Skills Challenge
* Mini-Mites, Mites, and Squirts (ages 5-10)
11:00 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.: Public Skate

Wednesday, Feb. 22

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.: Family Ice Olympics
11:00 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.: Public Skate

Thursday, Feb. 23

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.: Hockey Skills Challenge
* Pee Wee, Bantam, and Midget (ages 11-17)
11:00 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.: Public Skate

Friday, Feb. 24

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.: Figure Skating Exhibition with Skate Great, Inc.
11:00 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.: Public Skate
8:00 – 9:50 p.m.: Public Skate

Facilities Update

The recreation department operates several facilities in and around the town. Several projects were completed and improvements made at these facilities in 2005.

Cart paths are now winding through all 18 holes of the Town of Hamburg Golf Course. The paths will serve to cut down on the wear and tear associated with carts being driven on the fairways and in the rough. In 2006, the Buildings and Grounds staff will continue to level out and place gravel on the dirt paths that still exist. The Buildings and Grounds staff is also working diligently to meet the goal of opening all 18 holes and greens on time this year. Parts of holes #12-15 suffered damage as a result of the September 2005 flood that left parts of the course under water for weeks.

The Fitness Center added a new treadmill to the wide array of equipment available for residents' use at the facility located at Hamburg Town Park.

Tot lots were constructed at the Juno and Deer Springs playgrounds in 2005. Residents of the Deer Springs subdivision now have access to a playground structure, shelter, and swing set. A playground structure was added to the park area off Juno Drive that already includes a shelter and swing set.



Tot lot at Juno Playground

Ten new lacrosse fields were opened in June of 2005. The fields, which are located at the Hamburg Recreation Center on Lakeview Road, are used primarily by the Hamburg Knights Lacrosse Association, which had more than 500 participants in 2005.

Four new backstops were installed at the lighted softball diamonds at the Hamburg Recreation Center.

Recreation Director Martin Denecke wishes to acknowledge Tim Connolly and Sean Fanning of the Buildings and Grounds Department for their assistance in coordinating these projects.

Town Residents Enjoy Blast on the Beach

The sixth annual Town of Hamburg Blast on the Beach took place on Saturday, July 30, 2005 at the Hamburg Town Park. The weather could not have been better, resulting in record crowds for the day long event.



Kevin Smith, overall winner of the 2005 Dash and Splash Family Fun Run.

The Blast got underway with the Dash and Splash Family Fun Run, a race which began at Frontier Middle School and concluded at the Town Park. In addition, the Town Park was the site of the first annual 3-on-3 Blast on the Beach Basketball Tournament, a sandcastle building contest, and a bigger and better sand volleyball tournament.

There was plenty of music and tons of activities for the whole family throughout the day. The Blast concluded with a huge fireworks display over Lake Erie at dusk.

Town Collects Sports Equipment for Global Gear Drive

The recreation department, in conjunction with the Hamburg Youth Sports Partnership (HYSP), solicited donations in 2005 for the Global Gear Drive.

The Global Gear Drive was created by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) in an effort to put sports equipment in the hands of children in third-world countries. Donations of sports gear are accepted and shipped to countries that face shortages of quality equipment, as well as poor and unsafe playing facilities, in an attempt to improve the sports landscape and put smiles on the faces of children.

The recreation department and its partnering organizations collected over 30 boxes full of equipment that was shipped out last spring.



Recreation Supervisor Curt S. Herrmann (at right) helps collect sports equipment.

Recreation Department Receives Grants

The Town of Hamburg Recreation Department was the recipient of several grants in 2005:

- \$2,360 from the Buffalo Bills Youth Football Foundation, which provided funding for a new program, Monday Night Football for the Disabled;
- \$1,500 from the National Football League Youth Football Fund, which also provided funding for a new program, Monday Night Football for the Disabled;
- \$1,000 from the Junior Tennis Foundation, a branch of the U.S. Tennis Association. This grant allowed the recreation department to enhance its tennis instruction to the youth in the Town of Hamburg by purchasing tennis equipment and offering tennis lessons to some playgrounds in the Town of Hamburg equipped with tennis courts during the summer. Additionally, the grant enhanced the tennis instruction program for the recreation department's youth-oriented Day Camp program.
- \$1,000 from Pizza Hut on McKinley Parkway, which was used to purchase jerseys for the summer 2005 Youth Basketball program;
- \$100 from the National Recreation and Park Association and Major League Baseball, which provided funding for the Pepsi Pitch, Hit, and Throw Competition. This event, which was held on May 14, 2005, was a sports competition for boys and girls between the ages of 7-14 to test their skills in pitching, hitting, and base-running.
- \$500 from the Hamburg Youth Foundation, which will be partnering with Nature Ed-Ventures this year to develop nature trails on at the Hamburg Recreation Center on Lakeview Road. The trails are scheduled to open in this fall.



Summer Basketball League participants and recreation staff posed with Recreation Director Martin Denecke (left), McKinley Pkwy. Pizza Hut manager Andy Brose (3rd from left), and Councilman Thomas Quatroche (4th from left).

The recreation department will be reapplying for most of these grants this year, which will allow it to further enhance its services to the residents of the Town of Hamburg.

Recreation Staff Attend Training Program on At-Risk Youth

The Recreation Department hosted a training program entitled *Options: New Beginnings*, presented by Dr. Jimmy Calloway, Associate Professor of Recreation at Georgia State University, on June 7th. Dr. Calloway, whose research interests focus on at-risk youths, discussed a wide range of topics, including how to identify and understand troubled youths, how to provide relevant programs for them, and techniques to reach them. Dr. Calloway also discussed methods to stimulate cooperative learning in youths, as well as successful ways to obtain federal and state grants.

The program was held at "The Hub," the newly-opened \$3.2 million youth center at the Wesleyan Church of Hamburg. Dr. Calloway praised the facility as a successful example of a group of people working together to provide a state-of-the-art facility to serve the youths of a community.

Town Hosts Pepsi Pitch, Hit and Run Competition

Many boys and girls from the Town of Hamburg participated in the 2005 Pepsi Pitch, Hit, and Run Competition, held May 14. The free event, which was offered by the Town of Hamburg and sponsored by Pepsi and Major League Baseball, gave the participants, ages of 7-14, the opportunity to hone their pitching, hitting, and base-running skills.

The program participants had to pitch a baseball at a designated target, hit a baseball for distance and accuracy, and were timed for running from second base to home base.

All of the program participants received participation certificates, while participants of the event who placed in first, second, or third place in each category received a ribbon.

This event will be offered again in the spring of 2006. For details, call the recreation department at 646-5145.

Recreation Department Holds Youth Sports Month

The recreation department staged the second annual Youth Sports Month in 2005. Various events took place from mid-September through October including a Parents' Association for Youth Sports (PAYS) Family Movie Night, as well as a Volunteer Youth Sports Leader Appreciation Golf Tournament and the first-ever Character Coach of the Year Banquet (co-sponsored by the Character Council of Hamburg) in recognition of the efforts of the area's youth sports leaders, coaches, and administrators.

The second annual Youth Sports Summit included a meeting of the Hamburg Youth Sports Partnership (HYSP), a consortium of 19 independent organizations involved with youth sports programming in the town. The HYSP meets quarterly to discuss issues and confront challenges facing member organizations in an effort to create and maintain a positive culture for youth sports in Hamburg.

Youth Sports Month concluded with the "Discover Youth Sports in Hamburg" Community Festival held over Columbus Day weekend. The festival was held at various sites, including the Buffalo Bills Fieldhouse, the Hub, the Lakeview Soccer Fields, Hamburg Little Loop Fields, and the Hamburg Town Arena and Skate Park.

The festival was designed to accomplish several goals, including a desire to spread the word on the quantity and quality of youth sports programs in Hamburg. This was done through open houses and information tables at the various sites. There were skill development opportunities, as well as games and skill challenges for children in ice hockey, skateboarding, golf, soccer, basketball, and baseball. In addition, a football clinic took place at the Ralph Wilson Fieldhouse presented by the Buffalo Bills Rookie Club.

The Community Sports Festival was a fun event for the whole family that served as a great way to wrap-up another Youth Sports Month in Hamburg.

Town Offers Many Fall and Winter Recreation Programs

In the fall of 2005, the recreation department offered a new fall and winter program called Monday Night Football for the Disabled. The program, which was a beginner football clinic for children with disabilities, was partially funded by the Buffalo Bills Youth Foundation and the National Football League Youth Football Fund.

During the 2004-2005 fall and winter program season, Town of Hamburg residents enjoyed an array of programs, including the NFL Flag Football program, which saw an increase in participants over the previous year.

This program also received support from the Buffalo Bills, whose Buffalo Bills Rookie Club, comprised of Bills who are in their first season with the team, taught a skills clinic to the program participants at the Ralph Wilson Fieldhouse. The youth football players even had the opportunity to play a game at the Ralph Wilson Fieldhouse. In addition, each youth football player received a ticket to a Buffalo Bills game.

Participation in this program continued to grow in 2005-2006, as did participation in the Start Smart programs and the Learn To Skate program, which is operated in a partnership with Skate Great, Inc.

Other programs that are being offered this fall and winter season include several swimming programs, ski lessons, the Town Tot program, various programs at the Town of Hamburg Fitness Center, several volleyball programs, and the Saturday Gym program.

Young Golfers Participate in National Golf Tournament

A team of eight players from the Town of Hamburg's Hook A Kid on Golf Program attended the National Traditions of Golf Challenge Tournament held in Richmond, Virginia in August.

The team finished fourth in the competition with an aggregate score of 12-under par. The Traditions Tournament is the only one of its kind open to junior players that tests not only the player's golf skills, but also their knowledge of rules, etiquette, and golf history.

Plans are underway to enter a team in the 2006 event to be held in Bloomington, Indiana. A raffle will be held in the spring to help raise money for the trip.

Monday Night Football Clinic for the Disabled

The beginning of fall means the start of football season. In 2005, it also meant the debut of the first Monday Night Football Clinic for the Disabled. Local children ranging in age from 9 to 17 took part in this adaptive football clinic made possible through a grant from the Buffalo Bills Youth Foundation.



The clinic took place in the Big Tree Elementary School gymnasium. However, the Buffalo Bills invited clinic participants and staff to use the fieldhouse adjacent to Ralph Wilson Stadium for the final night of the program. Bills players and coaches joined clinic staff to provide participants with an experience they will not soon forget.

Town Recreation staff received assistance throughout the six-week clinic from volunteers associated with the Town of Hamburg Youth Engaged in Service (Y.E.S.) Program. The

Y.E.S. Program is designed to provide area middle and high school students with the opportunity to take part in volunteer endeavors throughout the community.

Hamburg Selected as Finalist in *Sports Illustrated* "GOOD SPORTS" Community Competition

The Town of Hamburg Recreation Department was recently recognized as a *Sports Illustrated* GOOD SPORTS Community Finalist, being ranked in the top 17 of the 1,300 participating agencies across America.

Sports Illustrated GOOD SPORTS, run in partnership with the National Recreation and Parks Association and Dodge, was designed to spotlight quality youth sports across the nation. Applicants for national recognition were judged on their ability to promote positive values such as sportsmanship and fair play, proper skill development, parent involvement, and positive coaching methods.

Communities also were reviewed on inclusiveness of play and community involvement in youth sports, such as consistent policies and procedures around safety and facility management.

Additionally, participants were required to host a youth sports summit and a youth sports festival. Hamburg ran these events as part of the second annual Youth Sports Month in Hamburg, held last September.

"The Town of Hamburg is pleased with the cooperation received from the community for this program," said Recreation Director Martin Denecke. "In particular, we appreciate the assistance of the volunteer youth sports leaders, who give so much to the town's young athletes."

Department Honored as Top "Hook A Kid on Golf" Site

The recreation department received the Don Springer Award in 2005, presented annually to the top Hook A Kid on Golf site.

The Town of Hamburg Golf Course is one of more than 300 sites nationwide to offer the Hook A Kid on Golf program, and it is the only site in New York State to offer the full, comprehensive program.

More than 200 young people from Hamburg and the surrounding communities participate each year in Hook A Kid on Gold programs that include Tee Level Clinics, the Green Level Golf Training Program, and the Challenge Golf League. Due to its popularity, the Challenge Golf League expanded to two nights in 2005, and the Green Level Training and Tee Level Clinics were full once again.

Recreation Supervisor Joe Wenzel has been instrumental in the development of the Hook A Kid on Golf program since its inception here in 1994. He credits the work of Golf Course Assistant Manager Chris DiOrio, current and former staff members including Tony DiOrio, Paul Aroune, and Matt Pokigo, and dozens of volunteer coaches for the success of this program at the local level.

Registration for the 2006 Hook A Kid on Golf program will begin in early April at the Town Golf Course.

Step Up To Health Summit

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) chose the Town of Hamburg Recreation Department as a host site for a Step Up to Health Summit in 2005. The event, held at Michael's Banquet Facility on May 3, was one of 17 to take place across the country.

A series of workshops were offered to park and recreation professionals, educators, medical professionals, and others interested in learning about this grassroots movement. The focus of these events is on increasing awareness of what it takes to choose a healthy lifestyle and to create more livable communities.

The Recreation Report is published quarterly by the Town of Hamburg Recreation Department.

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